

generating progress for struggling people and our planet. I am extraordinarily grateful for his contributions to our nation and world.

RECOGNIZING MS. AISHA KARIMAH

**HON. ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON**

OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 6, 2014*

Ms. NORTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues in the House to join me in recognizing Ms. Aisha Karimah, who today is observing 45 years in the District of Columbia at NBC4 Washington, where she has provided exemplary service to Washington, D.C. and the national capital region.

For more than four decades, Aisha has brilliantly used her talents to help NBC4 grow and has championed our city and region and its many community campaigns—Beautiful Babies Right from the Start, Drug Free Zones, It Takes a Whole Village, Make the Right Call, Camp 4 Kids, Get Healthy 4 Life, Backpacks 4 Kids, Food 4 Families, and The NBC4 Health & Fitness Expo—we can hardly name even a representative group of community causes that Aisha has not touched. Ms. Karimah is a particularly positive and dedicated role model for African Americans and for women entering journalism and serves as a mentor and confidant to hundreds of young people. She has been a wonderful friend and guidepost to me since I was elected to Congress in 1990.

As a veteran television producer, Aisha currently produces two weekly news programs: Reporters Notebook and Viewpoint. She has shared her talents by also producing programs for Howard University Television, including The Urban Health Report, Washington's Leaders and The Randall Robinson Program.

Aisha is a graduate of Howard University and Wesley Theological Seminary. She is a proud and devoted mother of two sons: Donnell, a graduate of American and George Washington Universities, and Jay, a Howard University graduate who is married to Whitney, also a Howard graduate, and a cancer survivor.

Aisha says her life's work has been a labor of love and a blessing, "because only God could have taken a girl from the Lincoln Heights projects, having grown up on welfare and working at the age of 10 years old to a position where she has been able through her work to help make a positive difference in the same community in which she grew up." Notwithstanding serious illness, Aisha Karimah kept going at NBC4. Today, we bring Aisha Karimah from behind the scenes to let her take a bow for 45 years of beneficial contributions to the District of Columbia and the national capital region.

Mr. Speaker, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing Ms. Aisha Karimah for an extraordinary job well beyond the call of duty for NBC4 Washington and the national capital region for 45 extraordinary years.

MILITARY CONSTRUCTION AND VETERANS AFFAIRS AND RELATED AGENCIES APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2015

SPEECH OF

**HON. CHRIS VAN HOLLEN**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, April 30, 2014*

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 4486) making appropriations for military construction, the Department of Veterans Affairs, and related agencies for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2015, and for other purposes:

Mr. VAN HOLLEN. Mr. Chair, I rise today to express my support for H.R. 4486, the FY15 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies Appropriations Act. I commend Chairmen ROGERS and CULBERSON and Ranking Members LOWEY and BISHOP for crafting a bipartisan bill that not only provides for current and former service members and their families but also substantially addresses the veterans' claims backlog.

The MilCon-VA bill makes critical investments in our military infrastructure, housing, and services to our nation's veterans, active military members and their families. It provides \$71.5 billion in discretionary funding for these programs and activities, including \$64.7 billion for the Department of Veteran Affairs. It also provides \$58.7 billion in advance funding for the VA in FY16.

This legislation also builds on efforts made in last year's MilCon-VA bill to end the claims backlog that continues to plague our VA regional offices, including the VA's Baltimore Regional Office. It fully funds the budget request of \$173.3 million for the Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS) and provides an additional \$20 million to the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) for digitizing records and staffing needs. The legislation also requires each VA regional office to submit a monthly report on its claims processing performance and imposes even stricter requirements on the poorest performing offices around the country. I am hopeful that these measures will be an important step in ensuring that backlogged claims are expedited as quickly as possible.

I do have reservations about a number of provisions contained in the bill, however. I strongly oppose section 411, which prohibits the construction, renovation, or expansion of any facility in the U.S. to house individuals that are currently being detained at Guantánamo Bay. And as the White House outlined in its Statement of Administration Policy, it is disappointing that this bill does not provide full funding for VA Medical Care, potentially delaying the delivery of important health care services to our veterans.

Despite my concerns, the MilCon-VA bill reflects our commitment and the promises we have made to our veterans, our service members, and their families. I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this important piece of legislation.

TRIBUTE TO THE PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA LASALLE ACADEMY CLASS OF 2015

**HON. ROBERT A. BRADY**

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 6, 2014*

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the future leaders of LaSalle Academy, Class of 2015, on their Leadership visit to the Nation's Capital on May 6th 2014. This trip, through the sites they will see, the leaders they will meet, and about whom they will learn, will expose them to the attributes effective leaders must possess in guiding individuals toward a value-based, common goal. I trust this trip will afford these young men and women not only an opportunity to learn effective leadership skills, but also the worth of selfless leadership to themselves, their school, community, and nation.

LaSalle Academy of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania has inculcated a robust value set in its curriculum and has readied these young men and women for this leadership role. Knowing they are our leaders of tomorrow, I and the teachers and staff at LaSalle Academy are happy to have provided them the opportunity to see leadership in action in our nation's capital.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to congratulate these students on their interest in our government and in becoming inspirational leaders. Please join me in wishing them every success in their future endeavors.

HONORING NEKIAYA JACKSON

**HON. BENNIE G. THOMPSON**

OF MISSISSIPPI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, May 6, 2014*

Mr. THOMPSON of Mississippi. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Ms. Nekiaya Jackson, who is an extraordinary student, athlete, and member of society.

Nekiaya Jackson was born in Greenwood, MS on August 19, 1996. She is the proud daughter of Amy Perkins and Michael Jackson. Starting from a young age, she was always excited about learning. She read, wrote, and often inquired about subjects that were far beyond her level. She was named "gifted" and was placed in an accelerated learning program in the second grade. Her thirst for knowledge and adventurous spirit led to excellence in all subjects throughout elementary school, middle school, and high school.

Nekiaya is currently a senior honor student at Greenwood High School where she is involved in numerous clubs and organizations. Some of these include: Beta Club, National Honor Society, and the math society—Mu Alpha Theta.

Nekiaya is the President of the Skills USA organization and a member of its Opening and Closing Team, which has placed 1st place two years and will go on to the National Skills USA Competition in Kansas City and represent Skills USA as a 1st place winner for the state of Mississippi. As a member of the Youth Advisory Council, she volunteers monthly at Golden Age Nursing Home to engage its residents in various activities. She is also a four